DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 614 CS 009 824

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TITLE Let's Celebrate Whole Language (A Practical Guide for Parents).
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 8p.; Paper (in the form of an 8-panel brochure) presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (79th, Baltimore, MD, November 17-22, 1989).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Classroom Environment; Family Environment; *Parent Student Relationship; Primary Education; Reading Instruction; Reading Writing Relationship; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Literature Based Instruction; *Whole Language Approach

ABSTRACT

Developed by experienced professionals, this brochure is designed to let parents know what the Whole Language Approach is, how it is being used in the classroom, and how parents can apply Whole Language in the home. (RS)

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Let's Celebrate Whole Language

(a practical guide for parents)

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Presented by:

Marilyn Graves

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Dear Parents,

The purpose of this brochure is to let you know: 1) what Whole Language is; 2) how it is being used in the classroom; and 3) how you can apply Whole Language at home to benefit your child.

PART 1 - WHAT IS WHOLE LANGUAGE?

Whole Language advocates keeping language whole (not building language from letters and sounds). Young children are immersed in language as they listen, speak, write, and read each day. The children are given experiences which are rich in natural language. They are surrounded with literature - with print. Children learn to read and write as they learned to talk - naturally, as part of their development. New skills are mastered through teacher modelling and a great deal of use. In the Whole Language classroom children are given opportunities to read and write every day.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF A WHOLE LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

A well-balanced Whole Language program includes:

1. reading to children
2. sustained silent reading
3. guided reading
4. individualized reading
5. opportunities for sharing
6. shared book experience
7. language experience
8. writing modelled by teacher
9. children's writing
10. content area reading and writing

Natural Language Approach	**Sub-Skills Approach**
books	letters
stories	sounds
paragraphs	words
sentences	sentences
words	paragraphs
sounds	stories
letters	books
1-Meaning-centered Reading	2-Decoding-centered Reading

Explanation:
The natural or Whole Language Approach begins with books, with meaning, while at the same time working towards identification of words, sounds, and letters. The Sub-Skills or decoding approach to reading begins teaching individual letters, then sounds and eventually working towards reading of simple sentences and then stories and books.

PART 2 - HOW IS WHOLE LANGUAGE BEING USED IN YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM?

The Whole Language environment can be achieved in a variety of ways which

usually include SHARED READING, WRITING PROCESS, and an entire curriculum which is LITERATURE BASED.

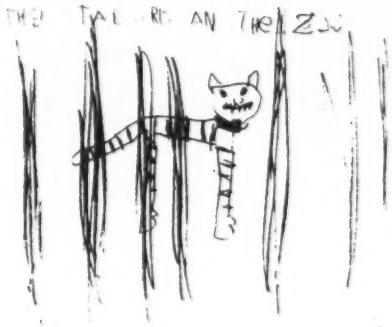
SHARED READING is an extension of the home environment of "learning to talk" and bedtime stories. In the Whole Language classroom it takes place in a whole group format using chants, rhymes, songs, and books printed large enough for all to see. Children enjoy and experiment with language. Since it is a whole group effort, each child feels free to participate as he is able. (Materials are chosen for their predictable nature, rhyming patterns, or pronounced rhythm.) SHARED READING is a highly active and motivating time, which quickly becomes a favorite part of each day.

WRITING PROCESS

The process of writing includes writing, response, and revision - learning by doing. Choosing their own topics, children work through their initial drafts without the constraints of neatness, correct punctuation, and spelling. Invented spelling (words spelled as they sound) is used during these early drafts. It is during the editing stage that spelling and punctuation are corrected, first by the student and then by the teacher. In the beginning, some children may only be able to draw a picture or write a few letters or a word or two. But gradually, they learn to express complete thoughts and the results are amazing. The drawing of pictures help children organize their thoughts and serves as an outline. Writing requires active thinking on many levels and helps students become better thinkers. It is a teaching tool of great value.

In a Whole Language classroom the entire curriculum is LITERATURE BASED. By its very nature, Whole Language integrates languate arts with areas such as art, music, math, science, and social studies. Children are introduced to the literature that goes along with the area of study. What better way to learn about dinosaurs than by reading about them in non-fiction books written espe-

cially for children and then writing a dinosaur-book! A Whole Language classroom is an exciting, active, child-centered environment. Children have a measure of control over their lives and learning as they select books they want to read, topics they want to write about, or decide which activity center they will go to next. Children learn to become decision makers and take increasing responsibility for their own learning in a supportive, non-threatening environment.

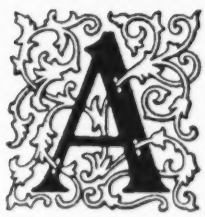


PART 3 - HOW YOU CAN APPLY WHOLE LANGUAGE AT HOME

The following list is just a brief summary of possible activities you may use with your children to promote a Whole Language environment. You may notice that you are already using some of these activities without realizing it. Keep it up!

* Provide a writing corner with a variety of materials to write on and with (markers,crayons, pens, pencils, construction paper, scrap paper, etc.).
* Read to and with your children. Encourage them to follow, predict what will happen, read along, and even take over reading.
* Have a wide selection of books available (library, book store, magazines, etc.).
* Use written language to tell children what things mean and what they are for. Encourage them to guess what written language says (grocery lists, recipes, letters, notes, labels, magazines, etc.)

* Use communication between school and home and make children aware of the messages they contain (read PTA notices, teacher notes, excuses, etc. to your child).
* When riding/walking in the neighborhood look for environmental print (play guessing games - What does the sign say? What number is on the sign?).



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